

**Meeting of the  
Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council  
Northfield Inn & Conference Center, 3280 Northfield Drive, Springfield, Illinois  
May 10, 2019  
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
MINUTES**

<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT Cont'd</b>	<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>STAFF</b>
Gladys Boyd	Kate Monte	Katy Cotts	Barbara Crandall
Donna Gregory	Mary Savage	Gordon Hannon	Dee Estep
Arrelida Hall	Carol Sheley	Kellye Norris	Carlene Erno
Rachel Hoyt	Denise Spires	Rachel Pruess	Gwenn Eyer
Ken Keefe	Lesley Stuart		Maggie Poteau
Harriet Kersh	Samella Taylor-Lewis	<b>GUESTS</b>	Cynthia Richter-Jackson
Maya Maclin	Stephanie Tesreau	(None)	Susan Wilkins
Susan McConnell			

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Carol Sheley**

SWFCAC Chairperson Carol Sheley welcomed everyone to the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and council members and guests introduced themselves.

**Final Report to the Director**

**Carol Sheley**

There were no final reports to the Director. The monthly Director's Report was submitted as required by law.

**Approve SWFCAC Minutes from 4/12/19**

*Denise Spires made the motion to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2019 SWFCAC meeting. Ken Keefe seconded, and the motion carried.*

**Child & Family Service Plan/PIP Workgroup**

**Cynthia Richter-Jackson**

Cynthia collaborated with council member Rachel Hoyt to develop a summary of information gathered at our last meeting. Rachel reported out on their work. Council members were invited to provide additional input.

- It is important to ensure a high level of trauma-informed practice when contracting with therapists. Contracting may work with private contractors but not with mental health facilities.
- The Choices pilot did not provide good outcomes. We are asking that foster parents have the ability to work as 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractors identifying the best provider for children in their care.
- Counselors are now restricted with regard to travel, so youth may have to travel great distances to receive services.
- There are huge areas where there are no providers available to foster children.

- Providers should be credentialed, with current licenses.
- Pull in SPIDER resources to identify credentialed trauma-informed providers.
- Credentials:
  - 1) Valid Illinois license for therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, etc.
  - 2) Training in trauma-informed care. Interns may observe, but the licensed therapist should provide services.
- Flex funds should be used to address the barrier of need for self-pay to cover when a contract ends.
- The children we care for are worth the best the State can provide.

#### Form Review Recommendations:

##### Root Cause

- Add agency turnover.
- The limitation of the use of the medical card due to low reimbursement rates and lack of timely payment reduces the pool of qualified providers.
- Remove the reference to the medical card in the third line.
- Rural areas are a distance from providers, requiring foster parents to take time off work, pay travel expenses, etc.

##### Hypothesis

- Add “throughout the state” to quality providers line.
- Come up with a way the Department/private agencies will supplement expenses.
- Recognize the alternative to providing supplemental funds is paying significantly higher rates to shelters and residential placements.
- Placement disruptions are caused by inconsistent services.

##### Key Activities

- Revise bullet two to say Council, rather than Committee.

#### Special Project

#### Maggie Poteau

Maggie is assisting in a project about attracting and retaining foster parents. She asked the council the following questions:

What made you want to become a foster parent?

- Word-of-mouth.
  - One council member worked at a bank where a customer was a DCFS investigator. The worker recognized that council member was informally fostering and encouraged the transition to fostering, providing services and supports in an official capacity.
  - Another council member had a college roommate who later became a child welfare agency exec and encouraged participation.
- Some see the opportunity marketed outside the Department in public places.
- Workers sometimes make the transition to fostering.
- The reality that people want to build a family and they realize that there are waiting children or are unable to do so biologically.
- Volunteerism is critical.

What are the qualities of a successful foster parent?

- Patient
- Resourceful
- Connected to community
- Committed
- Gives new parents the opportunity to “test out” parenting
- Common sense

Are there different qualities for specialized foster parents?

- Same as above
- Specialized skills
- Tolerance
- Foster care experience

What is some basic information you wish you knew in advance?

- Knowledge of trauma and resulting behavioral issues
- Encouragement to be realistic in expectations
- Maintain self-care
- Know how to recognize triggers
- Lots of levels of oversight – parenting by committee. How many days a week will someone be in your home?
- Advocate for yourself and the child without fear
- You are not going to save the world. You are working to impact one life at a time.

Where should foster parents go to become more knowledgeable?

- Support groups
- Monitored social media groups
- The Department must keep them informed of recent changes
- Build a strong support system

What should social media look like?

- Link to local/regional groups
- Put more information on DCFS and agency social media pages.

### **Committee Reports:**

Policy and Legislative Committee

Ken Keefe and Stephanie Tesreau

The committee would like to invite Janet Ahern and Tina Franklin to address re: the normalcy policy. The committee will meet prior to the next meeting. They are working on topics for a 906 pamphlet to be distributed to foster parents. They plan to put together a recommendation about placement clearance and need to hear from Placement Clearance. They drafted a recommendation re: Administrative Procedure 13. The Legislative Report from Alexia Koziol was distributed to council members.

The council discussed an ad hoc Permanency Committee to discuss placement considerations, achieving and maintaining permanency in a timely manner. It will be addressed at the next meeting.

CWAC – the CWAC meeting was postponed, so there is no report.

IFAPA

Gladys Boyd

Gladys has been asked to attend support group meetings. There are concerns with training being cancelled and concerns have been expressed about training content. Gladys plans to meet with the Director about planning a caregiver conference with foster parents paying for their own lodging.

**Regional Reports:**

Northern Region - They are holding meetings twice a month with good attendance and many foster parents are participating.

Central Region – One concern that came out of a meeting is that the administration is not responding to Foster Parent Law grievances. Another meeting group expressed concern with processing Day Care approval paperwork in a timely manner. (It may take up to four months.) The Central Payment unit is not processing private agency placements for DCFS homes in a timely manner which is slowing down foster parent board payments.

Cook South and Cook North – The Cook County Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner will take place on May 21. Director Smith plans to attend the meeting.

Southern – They held a conference call and they're planning the Madison/St. Clair foster parent appreciation event.

Stakeholder Comment – None

Public Comment – None

**MOTION:** *Mary Savage made the motion to adjourn. Maya Maclin seconded and the meeting adjourned at 3pm.*

**Next meeting:** June 21, 2019, Sheraton Lisle Naperville, 3000 Warrenville Road, Lisle, Illinois.

**Potential Agenda Items**

Day Care, including the approval process

State Guardian Janet Ahern

Tina Franklin, Policy